

bloodily it was an inn, and his master was as positive of the contrary. In short, their dispute lasted so long, that before they could decide it they reached the inn door, where Sancho straight went in, with all his train, without troubling himself any further about the matter.

CHAPTER II

WHAT HAPPENED TO DON QUIXOTE IN THE INN
WHICH HE TOOK FOR A CASTLE

THE innkeeper, seeing Don Quixote lying quite athwart the ass, asked Sancho what ailed him? Sancho answered it was nothing, only his master had got a fall from the top of a rock to the bottom, and had bruised his sides a little. The innkeeper had a wife, very different from the common sort of hostesses, for she was of a charitable nature, and very compassionate of her neighbour's affliction; which made her immediately take care of Don Quixote, and call her daughter (a good handsome girl) to set her helping-hand to his cure. One of the servants in the inn was an Asturian wench, a broad-faced, flat-headed, saddle-nosed dowdy; blind of one eye, and the other almost out: however, the activity of her body supplied all other defects. She was not above three feet high from her heels to her head; and her shoulders, which somewhat loaded her, as having too much flesh upon them, made her look downwards oftener than she could have wished. This

charming original likewise assisted the mistress and the daughter; and with the latter, helped to make the knight's bed, and a sorry one it was; the room where it stood was an old gambling cock-loft, which by manifold signs seemed to have been, in the days of yore, a repository for chopped straw. Somewhat farther, in a corner of that garret, a carrier had his lodging; and though his bed was nothing but the pannels and coverings of his mules, it was much better than that of Don Quixote, which only consisted of four rough-hewn boards laid upon two uneven tressels, a flock-bed, that, for thinness, might well have passed for a quilt, and was full of knobs and bunches, which had they not peeped out through many a hole, and shewn themselves to be of wool, might well have been taken for stones: the rest of that extraordinary bed's furniture was a pair of sheets, which rather seemed to be of leather than of linen cloth, and a coverlet whose every individual thread you might have told, and never have missed one in the tale.

In this ungracious bed was the knight laid, to rest his belaboured carcass, and presently the hostess and her daughter anointed and plaistered him all over, while Maritornes* (for that was

* Malitorne is old French for "mechante femme."

the name of the Asturian wench) held the candle. The hostess, while she greased him, wondering to see him so bruised all over, "I fancy," said she, "those bumps look much more like a dry beating than a fall."—"It was no dry beating, mistress, I promise you," quoth Sancho, "but the rock had I know not how many cragged ends and knobs, whereof every one gave my master a token of his kindness. And by the way, forsooth," continued he, "I beseech you save a little of that same tow and ointment for me too, for I don't know what is the matter with my back, but I fancy I stand mainly in want of a little greasing too."—"What, I suppose you fell too?" quoth the landlady.—"Not I," quoth Sancho, "but the very fright that I took to see my master tumble down the rock, has so wrought upon my body, that I am as sore as if I had been sadly mauled."—"It may well be as you say," cried the innkeeper's daughter; "for I have dreamed several times that I have been falling from the top of a high tower without ever coming to the ground; and, when I waked, I have found myself as out of order, and as bruised, as if I had fallen in good earnest."—"That is e'en my case, mistress," quoth Sancho; "only ill luck would have it so, that I should find myself e'en almost as battered

and bruised as my lord Don Quixote, and yet all the while be as broad awake as I am now."—"How do you call this same gentleman?" quoth Maritornes.—"He is Don Quixote de la Mancha," replied Sancho; "and he is a knight-errant, and one of the primest and stoutest that ever the sun shined on."—"A knight-errant," cried the wench, "pray what is that?"—"Heigh-day!" cried Sancho, "does the wench know no more of the world than that comes to? Why, a knight-errant is a thing which in two words you see well cudgelled, and then an emperor. To-day there is not a more wretched thing upon the earth, and yet to-morrow he'll have you two or three kingdoms to give away to his squire."—"How comes it to pass then," quoth the landlady, "that thou, who art this great person's squire, hast not yet got thee at least an earldom?"—"Fair and softly goes far," replied Sancho. "Why, we have not been a month in our gears, so that we have not yet encountered any adventure worth the naming: besides, many a time we look for one thing, and light on another. But if my lord Don Quixote happens to get well again, and I escape remaining a cripple, I'll not take the best title in the land for what I am sure will fall to my share."

¹ See Appendix, Note 1, Book III., Chapter II.

Here Don Quixote, who had listened with great attention to all these discourses, raised himself up in his bed with much ado, and taking the hostess in a most obliging manner by the hand, "Believe me," said he, "beautiful lady, you may well esteem it a happiness that you have now the opportunity to entertain my person in your castle. Self-praise is unworthy a man of honour, and therefore I shall say no more of myself, but my squire will inform you who I am; only thus much let me add, that I will eternally preserve your kindness in the treasury of my remembrance, and study all occasions to testify my gratitude. And I wish," continued he, "the powers above had so disposed my fate, that I were not already love's devoted slave, and captivated by the charms of the disdainful beauty who engrosses all my softer thoughts! for then would I be proud to sacrifice my liberty to this beautiful damsel." The hostess, her daughter, and the kind-hearted Maritornes, stared at one another, quite at a loss for the meaning of this high-flown language, which they understood full as well as if it had been Greek. Yet, conceiving these were words of compliment and courtship, they looked upon him and admired him as a man of another world: and so, having made him such returns

as innkeeper's breeding could afford, they left him to his rest; only Maritornes staid to rub down Sancho, who wanted her help no less than his master.

Now you must know, that the carrier and she had agreed to pass the night together; and she had given him her word, that as soon as all the people in the inn were in bed, she would be sure to come to him, and be at his service. And it is said of this good-natured thing, that whenever she had passed her word in such cases, she was sure to make it good, though she had made the promise in the midst of a wood, and without any witness at all: for she stood much upon her gentility, though she undervalued herself so far as to serve in an inn; often saying, that nothing but crosses and necessity could have made her stoop to it.

Don Quixote's hard, scanty, beggarly, miserable bed was the first of the four in that wretched apartment; next to that was Sancho's kennel, which consisted of nothing but a bed-mat and a coverlet, that rather seemed shorn canvas than a rug. Beyond these two beds was that of the carrier, made, as we have said, of the pannels and furniture of two of the best of twelve mules which he kept, every one of them goodly beasts, and in special good case; for he

was one of the richest muleteers of Arevalo, as the Moorish author of this history relates, who makes particular mention of him, as having been acquainted with him; nay, some do not stick to say he was somewhat akin to him.¹ However it be, it appears that Cid Hamet Benengeli was a very exact historian, since he takes care to give us an account of things that seem so inconsiderable and trivial. A laudable example, which those historians should follow, who usually relate matters so concisely, that we have scarce a smack of them, leaving the most essential part of the story drowned in the ink-horn, either through neglect, malice, or ignorance. A thousand blessings then be given to the curious author of *Tablante of Ricamonte*, and to that other indefatigable sage who recorded the achievements of Count Tomillas! for they have described even the most minute and trifling circumstances with a singular preciseness.—But to return to our story: you must know, that after the carrier had visited his mules, and given them their second course,* he laid himself down upon his pannels, in expectation of the most punctual Maritornes's kind visit. By this time Sancho, duly greased and

¹ See Appendix, Note 2, Book III., Chapter II.

* In Spain they get up in the night to dress their cattle, and give them their barley and straw, which serve for hay and oats.

anointed, was crept into his sty, where he did all he could to sleep, but his aching ribs did all they could to prevent him. As for the knight, whose sides were in as bad circumstances as the squire's, he lay with both his eyes open like a hare. And now was every soul in the inn gone to bed, nor any light to be seen, except that of a lamp which hung in the middle of the gate-way. This general tranquillity setting Don Quixote's thoughts at work, offered to his imagination one of the most absurd follies that ever crept into a distempered brain from the perusal of romantic whimsies. Now he fancied himself to be in a famous castle (for, as we have already said, all the inns he lodged in seemed no less than castles to him), and that the innkeeper's daughter (consequently daughter to the lord of the castle) strangely captivated with his graceful presence and gallantry, had promised him the pleasure of her embraces, as soon as her father and mother were gone to rest. This chimera disturbed him, as if it had been a real truth; so that he began to be mightily perplexed, reflecting on the danger to which his honour was exposed: but at last his virtue overcame the powerful temptation, and he firmly resolved not to be guilty of the least infidelity to his lady Dulcinea

del Toboso, though Queen Genever herself, with her trusty matron Quintaniona, should joint to decoy him into the alluring snare.

While these wild imaginations worked in his brain, the gentle Maritornes was mindful of her assignation, and with soft and wary steps, bare-foot, and in her smock, with her hair gathered up in a fustian coif, stole into the room, and felt about for her beloved carrier's bed: but scarce had she got to the door, when Don Quixote, whose ears were on the scout, was sensible that something was coming in; and therefore having raised himself in his bed, sore and wrapt up in plaisters as he was, he stretched out his arms to receive his fancied damsel, and caught hold of Maritornes by the wrist, as she was, with her arms stretched, groping her way to her paramour; he pulled her to him, and made her sit down by his bedside, she not daring to speak a word all the while. Now, as he imagined her to be the lord of the castle's daughter, her smock, which was of the coarsest canvas, seemed to him of the finest holland; and the glass-beads about her wrist, precious oriental pearls; her hair, that was almost as rough as a horse's mane, he took to be soft flowing threads of bright curling gold; and her breath, that had a stronger hogoe than stale

venison, was to him a grateful compound of the most fragrant perfumes of Arabia. In short, flattering imagination transformed her into the likeness of those romantic beauties, one of whom, as he remembered to have read, came to pay a private visit to a wounded knight, with whom she was desperately in love; and the poor gentleman's obstinate folly had so infatuated his outward sense, that his feeling and his smell could not in the least undeceive him, and he thought he had no less than a balmy Venus in his arms, while he hugged a fulsome bundle of deformities, that would have turned any man's stomach but a sharp-set carrier's. Therefore, clasping her still closer, with a soft and amorous whisper, "Oh! thou most lovely temptation," cried he, "oh! that I now might but pay a warm acknowledgment for the mighty blessing which your extravagant goodness would lavish on me! yes, most beautiful charmer, I would give an empire to purchase your most desirable embraces; but fortune, madam, fortune, that tyrant of my life, that unrelenting enemy to the truly deserving, has maliciously hurried and rivetted me to this bed, where I lie so bruised and macerated, that, though I were eager to gratify your desires, I should at this dear unhappy minute be doomed

to impotence. Nay, to that unlucky bar fate has added a yet more invincible obstacle; I mean my plighted faith to the unrivalled Dulcinea del Toboso, the sole mistress of my wishes, and absolute sovereign of my heart. Oh! did not this oppose my present happiness, I could never be so dull and insensible a knight as to lose the benefit of this extraordinary favour which you have now condescended to offer me."

Poor Maritornes all this while sweated for fear and anxiety, to find herself thus locked in the knight's arms; and without either understanding, or willing to understand his florid excuses, she did what she could to get from him, and sheer off without speaking a word. On the other side, the carrier, whose lewd thoughts kept him awake, having heard his trusty lady when she first came in, and listened ever since to the knight's discourse, began to be afraid that she had made some other assignation; and so, without any more ado, he crept softly to Don Quixote's bed, where he listened a while to hear what would be the end of all this talk, which he could not understand; but perceiving at last by the struggling of his faithful Maritornes, that it was none of her fault, and that the knight strove to detain her against

her will, he could by no means bear his familiarity; and therefore taking it in mighty dudgeon, he up with his fist and hit the enamoured knight such a swinging blow on the jaws, that his face was all over blood in a moment. And not satisfied with this, he got on the top of the knight, and with his splay feet betrampled him, as if he had been trampling a hay-mow. With that the bed, whose foundations were none of the best, sunk under the additional load of the carrier, and fell with such a noise that it waked the innkeeper, who presently suspects it to be one of Maritornes's nightly skirmishes; and therefore having called her aloud, and finding that she did not answer, he lighted a lamp and made to the place where he heard the bustle. The wench, who heard him coming, knowing him to be of a passionate nature, was scared out of her wits, and fled for shelter to Sancho's sty, where he lay snoring to some tune: there she pigged in, and slunk under the coverlet, where she lay snug, and trussed up as round as an egg. Presently her master came in, in a mighty heat: "Where's this damned whore?" cried he; "I dare say this is one of her pranks." By this Sancho awaked, and feeling that unusual lump, which almost overlaid him, he took it to be the night-mare, and began to lay about

him with his fists, and thumped the wench so unmercifully that at last flesh and blood were no longer able to bear it; and forgetting the danger she was in, and her dear reputation, she paid him back his thumps as fast as her fists could lay them on, and soon roused the drowsy squire out of his sluggishness, whether he would or no; who, finding himself thus pommelled, by he did not know who, he bustled up in his nest, and catching hold of Maritornes, they began the most pleasant skirmish in the world; when the carrier perceiving, by the light of the innkeeper's lamp, the dismal condition that his dear mistress was in, presently took her part, and leaving the knight, whom he had more than sufficiently mauled, flew at the squire and paid him confoundedly. On the other hand, the innkeeper, who took the wench to be the cause of all this hurly-burly, cuffed and kicked, and kicked and cuffed her over and over again; and so there was a strange multiplication of fisticuffs and drubbings. The carrier pommelled Sancho, Sancho mauled the wench, the wench belaboured the squire, and the innkeeper thrashed her again; and all of them laid on with such expedition, that you would have thought they had been afraid of losing time. But the jest was, that in the heat

of the fray the lamp went out, so that, being now in the dark, they plied one another at a venture: they struck and tore, all went to rack, while nails and fists flew about without mercy.

There happened to lodge that night in the inn one of the officers belonging to that society which they call the old holy brotherhood of Toledo, whose chief office is to look after thieves and robbers. Being waked with the heavy bustle, he presently jumped out of his bed, and with his short staff in one hand and a tin box with his commission in it in the other, he groped out his way, and being entered the room in the dark, cried out, "I charge you all to keep the peace: I am an officer of the holy brotherhood." The first he popped his hand upon happened to be the poor battered knight, who lay upon his back at his full length, without any feeling, upon the ruins of his bed. The officer having caught him by the beard, presently cried out, "I charge you to aid and assist me;" but finding he could not stir, though he griped him hard, he presently imagined him to be dead, and murdered by the rest in the room. With that he bawled out to have the gates of the inn shut. "Here's a man murdered," cried he; "look that nobody makes his escape." These words struck all the combat-

ants with such a terror that, as soon as they reached their ears, they gave over and left the argument undecided. Away stole the innkeeper to his own room, the carrier to his pannels, and the wench to her kennel; only the unfortunate knight, and his as unfortunate squire, remained where they lay, not being able to stir; while the officer, having let go Don Quixote's beard, went out for a light, in order to apprehend the supposed murderers; but the innkeeper having wisely put out the lamp in the gateway, as he sneaked out of the room, the officer was obliged to repair to the kitchen chimney, where with much ado, puffing and blowing a long while amidst the embers, he at last made shift to get a light.